



NEWS RELEASE

FOREST HEIGHTS POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Speed Monitoring Systems Effective at Reducing Speed on Indian Head Highway

The recent deployment of speed monitoring devices by the Forest Heights Police Department on Indian Head Highway (MD 210) has significantly reduced speeding within the municipality. During the third week of RADAR camera deployments in both directions along Indian Head Highway, at sites that were specifically approved by the State Highway Administration, the number of citations issued peaked at approximately 1,500. Each successive week since the peak, however, speed camera citations have fallen and hovered around 1,000. "This statistic shows that Operation Get Home Safe is effective in getting drivers to slow down and in promoting public safety in town," said Mayor Andrea McCutcheon.

The Town of Forest Heights straddles both sides of dual-lane Maryland Route 210 and includes two elementary schools causing children and parents to frequently cross the busy State highway. According to a traffic study conducted in January 2010, over 30% of drivers exceeded the highway's posted 35 mph speed limit by 11 mph or more. "We have an image of a car traveling in excess of 89 mph despite the posted photo enforcement and reduce speed warning signs," said Sergeant Calvin Washington.

With a comparatively smaller police department than surrounding jurisdictions Forest Heights officers patrol Indian Head Highway, a major thoroughfare handling between 40,000 to 60,000 vehicles a day; the speed monitoring devices play a critical role in preventing injuries and accidents within the Town. "We were hard pressed when monitoring pedestrian safety along both Indian Head Highway and Livingston Road for both schools," remarked Acting Chief Webb.

The State has installed crosswalks on MD 210 north of the off ramp to I-95, at Livingston Road and at Talbert Drive, near the northern town boundary. New crosswalks on MD 210 connecting the east and west sides of town were installed near the southern limits approximately 1,000 feet west of Flintstone Elementary School. Since state aid for municipal police protection has been cut, the Town plans to use its portion of state shared revenues from speed cameras for items such as school crossing guards, communications systems, portable radios, advanced speed LASER units, and additional traffic enforcement training.

School zones were established last fall by ordinance after public notice and a hearing held at the Forest Heights Municipal Building. Various school zones were designated along several municipal, county and State roadways within the Town last year, but State permission to operate the cameras along Indian Head Highway was not finally granted until May after the first deployment of speed cameras was scheduled to kick off in March on Talbert Drive, a municipal street near Forest Heights Elementary School. The Town plans to further use speed cameras on Livingston Road in August. After the first deployment of a speed camera in a local jurisdiction and the initial passage of the statutorily mandated 30-day grace period, speed cameras are thereafter authorized by law to be relocated or added at new sites anywhere within the jurisdiction's previously designated school zones.

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